



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana

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IM Weekly Highlights

- Four more purchase orders for site build-out on PSIC-funded sites (IJ-1 & 2) have been sent out. This brings to 8 sites out of 16 that are expected to be constructed this year.
- The microwave antenna on the Cominco site has now been replaced. Motorola has trunking equipment in test mode on this site, too.
- BNSF is working with Motorola to finalize connectivity to the King and Blue Mountain sites now that electrical upgrades are complete.
- The STARC Amory tower upgrade is complete.
- Construction is complete on the Broken Pick site. A final site walk is in the works.
- Harris-Stratex continues to resolve issues on the microwave path from Teton to the Hill County Sheriff's office.
- The installation of a shelter and generator at Bull Mountain is almost complete.

IM Governance Sub-Committees Active

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Members of the IM Governance Committee (IMGC) heard several reports from sub-committee chairs during its Mon., July 13 meeting in Helena. Cheri Kilby, Bylaws Sub-Committee Chair, reported that she and Bill Fleiner discussed the upcoming election of officers. The only position that needs to be elected is the second vice chair, who is elected every three years. Work is also taking place on the annual independent audit. Members discussed the possibility of creating voting positions on the IMPD for other representatives as well as loosening some restrictions on using proxies during Standing Committee meetings.

A survey is needed of the three acres outlined in the XL Heights buy-sell agreement that the owners recently signed. Bob Murdo, Legal Counsel, also has reviewed the Motorola Second Master Controller contract.

George Gupton, Staffing Sub-Committee Chair, discussed the Integration Planner and Compliance Monitor positions and indicated that position descriptions are still begin fine tuned. In addition, members have received an updated version of the IM Personnel Policies/Employee Benefits Plan for their review.

Dave McPherson, Chair Business Practices/SOP Sub-Committee, indicated that this Sub-Committee is looking for additional members who have experience developing SOPs. If you are interested and have a technical background, let Dave know. The plan is to develop SOP templates and assist jurisdictions in writing them.

Bill Fleiner reported that the Training Sub-Committee has five training projects underway: a site manager module, fleet mapping; SOPs; Communication Unit

Leader training, and Blueprint for Excellence. The next fleet mapping training session is scheduled for Aug. 4 and 5 in Great Falls, while the SOP training is scheduled for Helena and Billings on July 28 and July 29.

Ian Marquand, Public Affairs and Outreach Consultant, has begun planning the Sustainability Plan outreach trips. Members made suggestions for publicizing the meetings and provided input on the PowerPoint presentation and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) brochure he provided. Ian also is in the process of developing a video about the IM Project.

The next IMGC meeting will be Mon., Aug. 10 from 1:00 to 5:00 pm at the offices of Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.

IM Project Directors Get Updated

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

On Tues., July 24, Kevin Bruski, IM Executive Director, gave the Interoperability Montana Project Directors (IMPD) an extensive update on the IM Project. He noted that the Northern Tier final change order with Harris-Stratex simply clarifies microwave design and equipment changes that occurred during the life of the contract and is not a contract close-out. The IMPD learned that several more NEPAs have been approved, and Kevin thanked Amy Mays, DES, for her assistance. The IM has issued infrastructure award letters for the Sierra, KONA, Ellis, and Antelope sites, and Sabre purchase orders have been sent out. Kevin indicated that out of the original 16 sites scheduled for build-out and upgrades this summer, work will begin shortly on just about all of them.

He also informed the group that he, Carl Hotvedt and Ian Marquand met with representatives from Jon Tester's office on June 30 to discuss the IM appropriations request. He urged consortia members to send follow-up letters of support to the Senator's Office. IMPD members also were asked to provide input on the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) report.

Kevin distributed copies of a letter from the Dawson County Commissioners, in which they decline taking ownership of the Second Master Controller due to financial concerns over operating costs. Work continues with Harris-Stratex on the Northern Tier microwave system. Despite a major failure in one of the servers at the Master Controller in Lewis and Clark County about two weeks ago, the network did not experience a hitch. Redundant systems worked seamlessly.

Sheriff Walsh gave the IM Finance Committee report while Bill Fleiner reviewed the Total Funding Source report. He said that positive gains have been made to eliminate ongoing extension requests from funding sources. Bill also emphasized the importance of having locals jurisdictions assist with such items as road repair on site build-out projects.

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Bob Murdo, IM Legal Counsel, reported that an MOU with the U.S. Marshals Service is complete, which outlines the use of their frequencies. Ian Marquand presented the outreach PowerPoint presentation about the IM Project as well as the FAQ pamphlet. He was complimented on his work.

Bob McWilliams reported on the most recent IM Technical Committee meeting, while Mark Canton, Motorola, said that Phase 1 of the Second Master Controller project is to perform an extensive upgrade to all the trunking sites in Western Montana, and upgrades the existing Master Zone Controller and dispatch centers. Motorola will work closely with the IM and the IMTC on the implementation of this project.

Roger Smith, IM Radio System Administrator, gave a positive update on the status of fleet mapping along the Northern Tier. He explained that fleet mapping is a detailed process, and it is important to have a local person involved. Training will be provided to ensure that local entities can perform some of their own updates. He also emphasized that radio inventories are critical. A count is needed to determine how many radios are ready to go on the system as well as how many need to be upgraded. This inventory is due by the next IMPD meeting. New forms and spreadsheets are on the website at <http://interop.mt.gov/fleetmapping.mcp.x>.

Roger also reported that an RFP for last-mile hop solutions to National Guard Armories will be forthcoming within a few days and will be posted for 30 days. Then he reported on Network Sub-Committee activities. He noted that a ProVision software monitoring report for a 139-day period showed no errors or problems for the majority of Northern Tier sites.

The next IMPD meeting is set for Tues., Aug. 11 at the MACo offices, 2715 Skyway Drive, Building # 1 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

SCMIC Consortium Uses Unique Approach

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Individual members of the five-county South Central Montana Interoperability Communications Consortium (SCMICC) present "County Reports" at the beginning of their meeting. On Wed., July 15, SCMICC members met in Livingston and began the meeting with these reports. For Sweet Grass County, Kerry O'Connell noted that requests for construction and infrastructure bids at the Greycliff site were going out for bid this week and the bidding process closes Aug. 7. The Melville tower site was added to the IM five-year plan, which will be a good microwave hop between Cooney and Greycliff and will form another ring through the county. The radio shelter originally donated by the FBI to Gallatin County was transferred to the Sweet Grass County EOC. A tower will be installed in the next year or so.

Steve Digiovanna, Madison County, reported that County Commissioners have signed the IM Award and Authorization to proceed on the Sierra and Virginia City (VC) Pass sites. They are getting ready to move forward with the purchase of infrastructure and construction on both sites.

Peggy Glass, Park County, noted that the Myers Flat site walk was completed July 15. Everything at the site was up and running and the site was accepted by Park County. Peggy is working with Mountain Communications to get the microwave hop installed to their PSAP; then radio equipment will be moved in.

For Gallatin County, Frank Smith reported that the antenna tower for the new 9-1-1 Center arrived, and construction was expected to be completed by July 17. He also said that progress continues on the Fire North project. Montana Electronics has been installing components at several radio sites. The NEPA application that was holding up installation of the microwave link between High Flat and Timberline has been approved. In addition, Gallatin County is investigating a partnering opportunity with Verizon Wireless on a proposed cellular tower in Gallatin Gateway, which is to be erected next summer. The plan is to install a paging repeater, which should improve coverage in that area. The move date to the new 9-1-1 Center has been changed from Sept. 16 to October 12.

Kerry presented updates from the last IM Project Directors and Technical Committee meetings, while Peggy gave a report on the IM Finance Committee. Members endorsed having the consortium send a letter to Senator Jon Tester's office in support of the IM appropriations request, but emphasized the need to follow the IM five-year build-out plan and the importance of completing projects.

The next SCMICC meeting will be in Bozeman at Gallatin County Station 3, which is located at Carol and Davis Street off of Oak.

Upcoming Meetings

July 27

IM Technical Committee
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
MACo Large Conference Rm., 2715 Skyway Drive

July 28

SOP Technical Assistance Training
Helena • 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
MACo Large Conference Rm., Lower Level
2715 Skyway Drive

July 29

SOP Technical Assistance Training
Billings • 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
BLM Offices, 5001 Southgate Drive

July 29

Tri-County Consortium
Helena • 10:00 am
Dept. of Corrections Annex Bldg., Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

Aug. 4-5

Fleet Mapping Training
Great Falls • 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Great Falls Police Dept., 112 1st Street South
To register, contact Dorothy Gremaux at 406-535-1800
or e-mail her at dgremaux@ci.lewistown.mt.us

Aug. 6

Northern Tier Consortium
Havre • 9:00 am
Great Northern Inn, 1345 1st St.